

Poet's House
Northeast corner of
Granary and West Streets
New Harmony
Posey County
Indiana

HABS No. IND-37

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. IND-37

POET'S HOUSE

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Location: Northeast corner of Granary and West Streets, New Harmony, Posey County, Indiana

Present Owner: Mrs. Jane Owen, c/o Don Blair, New Harmony, Indiana

Brief Statement of Significance: This small frame house, built in 1815, was part of the Rappite, later Owenite, Utopian experimental community.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: The Harmony Society; The Owenite Community.
2. Date of erection: 1815
3. Builder, suppliers: The Harmony Society
4. Notes on alterations and additions:
 - a. Kitchen wing added (window removed for door to this wing) about 1827.
 - b. Bay and French doors have replaced typical window west of kitchen wing, north elevation; 1957.
 - c. Column in living room is not original. The original column did not have cap block as bevel in beam goes beyond this; 1957.

Alterations listed as b. and c. above were done when the house was restored by the present owner.

5. Important old views: In possession of the following -
Library, New Harmony
Don Blair, New Harmony
Edward D. James, 122 East Michigan Street,
Indianapolis, Indiana
6. Source of information: Interview with Don Blair, New Harmony, Indiana--engineer in charge of restoration of the structure.

- B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure: New Harmony was the home of two of the most widely known Utopian experiments tried in the United States. The first, The Harmony Society, from 1814 to 1824, was under the spiritual leadership

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of George Rapp. The community prospered under the business management of his adopted son, Frederick. This group, from Wurttemberg, Germany, united by their common belief in the imminent second coming of Christ, practiced celibacy. The second was under Robert Owen, a Scotch philanthropist and reformer, who brought scientists and teachers to the Middle West including William Maclure. Robert Owen named the town New Harmony in 1826.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: A typical frame dwelling unit of original Harmony Society or Rappite Community.
2. Condition of fabric: Restored.

B. Technical Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions and orientation: Two-story rectangular unit (20' x 29') with one-story unit (16' x 11') to north. The axis of the building is east-west, with main entrance on the east and one-story wing on the north.
2. Foundations: Brick with stone footings.
3. Wall construction: The main block is of two-story wood framing with 1" x 6" clapboard siding. The joists in the first and second floor ceilings are 6" x 5" and are supported at center by 7-1/2" x 10" beams. The 4" x 4" roof rafters are mortised into the ceiling joists and lapped and pegged alternately at ridge. There is no ridge board.
4. Openings:
 - a. Doors: Paneled type doors with typical Rappite molded trim.
 - b. Windows: Double-hung windows with six-light over six-light sash; typical Rappite molded trim.
5. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Gable - covered with wood shakes.
 - b. Eaves: Boxed, molded eaves.
6. Chimneys: Brick.

C. Technical Description of Interiors:

1. Floor plans: First floor--living room and later kitchen wing; second floor--two bedrooms and stair hall.

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2. Stairway: L-shaped, winding wood stairs.
3. Flooring: 6" wood plank.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster walls; plaster ceilings on handmade Dutch biscuit lath.
5. Doors: Plank type doors.
6. Trim: 1" x 6" wood trim with typical Rappite moldings.
7. Hardware: Cast and wrought iron.
8. Lighting: Candles and fireplace.
9. Heating: A furnace has been placed in a modern cellar with exterior access. Originally, heating was by fireplace, which had a bake oven and was covered on the exterior with cement plaster.

D. Site:

1. General setting: Located on northeast corner of intersection, north of the original Rapp-Owen Estate. The entrance is at the east end, not on the street, which is typical of the Rappite Community.
2. Enclosures: Modern.
3. Outbuildings: An old well, with a new cover, is at the northeast corner of the house.
4. Walks: Brick, probably of modern origin.
5. Landscaping: Modern.

Prepared by John W. Carmack, Architect
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